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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
FOR THE ELABORATION OF A CONVENTION TO
COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA (INCD)
Third session
New York, 17-28 January 1994
Agenda item 3

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION.

1. By its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly established a Special Voluntary Fund, administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat under the authority of the Secretary General of the United Nations, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiating process.

2. During the organizational session of the negotiating Committee some countries indicated their contributions to the Fund, others indicated their intention to do so as soon as their internal procedures would permit. The Chairman of the Committee urged Governments in a position to do so but which have not yet done so to contribute to the Special Voluntary Fund according to their possibilities at an early date. He also urged the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to contribute generously to the Special Voluntary Fund.

3. The current status of pledges and receipts is shown in the following table:

Special Voluntary Fund for participation of developing countries
(General Assembly resolution 47/188, para 15)
Status of contributions as of 10 January 1994

	Special Voluntary Fund	
	Pledges	Contributions
	(US dollars)	
MEMBER STATES		
Canada	77,662	77,662
Denmark	199,985	199,985
France*	104,199	70,358
Germany	185,827	185,827
Japan	to be announced	
Norway	199,985	199,985
Spain	42,024	42,024
Sweden	262,280	262,280
Switzerland	66,013	66,013
United Kingdom	111,727	111,727
USA	50,000	50,000
OTHERS		
European Union*	57,000	-
TOTAL	1,356,702	1,265,861

* Approximate US dollar equivalent of local currency pledge.

4. These resources have been used in connection with the first, second and third substantive sessions of the Committee. In extending assistance to the countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, due attention has been paid to the particular situation of the countries concerned, as well as precedents established recently by negotiating processes on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

5. In the light of the above considerations the Secretariat issued travel authorizations for the first and second sessions, to one delegate from about 70 countries including most LDCs and a significant number of developing countries affected by desertification and drought as specified in paragraph 15 of General Assembly's resolution 47/188. For the third session, funds were available to cover only 45 countries.

6. In addition, financial assistance has been extended to 3 representatives of developing countries who are members of the Bureau of the Committee and its two Working Groups, in order to ensure that the delegates concerned have no difficulty in participating in the Committee's work.

7. Should appropriate arrangements be adopted for the fourth and fifth sessions (Geneva and Paris), i.e., the funding of one delegate from some 70 countries and Bureau members, the total amount of additional contributions required for this Fund would amount to an estimated US$800,000. In the light of this situation, the Committee may wish to call upon potential donors to make the necessary contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund.

8. The Committee may also wish to give further guidance to the Executive Secretary concerning the adequacy of the arrangements made in respect of the use of the Fund for participation in the substantive sessions held to-date and concerning its future use.

II. TRUST FUND FOR THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

9. The General Assembly, by its resolution 47/228, paragraph 13 decided that "the negotiating process shall be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a Trust Fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations..." It also urged "governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the Trust Fund."

10. The current situation concerning pledges and contributions is shown in the following table. A number of countries which had pledged have made contributions while others have pledged without specifying the amounts of their envisaged contributions. The following countries made such pledges: Denmark, Germany, Japan, Spain and Sweden. The Secretariat has established contacts with other countries as well as Agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations to enlist their support. Pledges have been made by Australia and the European Union. UNDP has announced additional contributions in support of the negotiating process, including an amount of US$100,000 already put at the disposal of the INCD Secretariat by UNSO. UNEP has increased its support from the level reported to the second session.

Trust Fund for the Negotiating Process
Status of contributions as of 10 January 1994

	Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities	
	Pledges	Contributions
	(US dollars)	
MEMBER STATES		
Australia	115,996	34,915
Canada	134,982	134,982
Cyprus	1,000	1,000
Denmark	to be announced	-
Finland*	91,000	-
France	105,542	105,542
Germany	to be announced	-
Italy*	93,750	-
Japan	to be announced	-
Netherlands	555,139	555,139
Norway	187,971	187,971
Spain	to be announced	-
Sweden	to be announced	-
Switzerland*	328,699	185,310
USA	200,000	200,000
OTHERS		
European Union*	57,000	-
UNEP	400,000	300,000
TOTAL	2,187,998	1,704,859

* Approximate US dollar equivalent of local currency pledge.

11. At the time of the adoption of resolution 47/188, the General Assembly was informed that estimated costs in 1993 and 1994 for staff and conference servicing in connection with the work of the Committee would be absorbed in the United Nations Programme Budget for those years. Three professional level posts and four general service posts were provided from the regular budget for 1993, and two senior posts were loaned from the resources of the Department of Administration and Management. For 1994, the two senior level posts have been incorporated into the regular budget of INCD, and non-staff costs have been provided for at a similar level as that for 1993. The Fund was established for the purpose of supplementing the resources to be provided by the regular budget; these additional resources were required to enable the Secretariat to undertake activities designed to provide the necessary support to the negotiating process including preparatory substantive work at the national, regional and global levels. As summarized in the Aide Memoire attached to the Secretary General's note verbale, the Secretariat estimated the extrabudgetary resources needed at US$3.2 million, to enable it to carry out the activities identified.

12. As agreed with contributing countries, US, Canada, Switzerland, three staff members have been recruited for one year using the resources available in the Fund. France has made a contribution which has enabled the recruitment of an Associate Expert from a developing country for one year. A staff member of

the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has been seconded to the Secretariat for the duration of the negotiations. The FAO has also seconded an Environmental Lawyer to assist the Secretariat on a part-time basis. Further, the Secretariat has been in contact with Italy and Spain to obtain the secondment of civil servants or the financing of experts. Other staff members, both professional and general service, may be made available from the United Nations secretariat, other institutions or will be recruited as temporary staff financed from the Fund.

13. The Committee may wish to call upon potential donors to respond to the need for contributions to the Trust Fund so as to enable the Secretariat to launch the activities designed to support the negotiating process.